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## Shared, History, Story, Traditions, Dreams, Vision

Some of you have already figured out that story and imagery are important aspects of my ministry. That being the case, I am enjoying doing some creative thinking about the theme of the Southeast Conference Annual meeting, “For Such a Time as This.” It has been difficult to come up with a visual representation of that phrase. I have sketched out a jigsaw pattern with the words *shared, history, story, traditions, dreams, vision*. The other image I had was of a tree or vine with those words incorporated into the structure of the plant. Luckily for you all, I have now turned that task to people who are professionally trained to develop ideas and images.

This is an exciting time for the Southeast Conference as well as for me personally. I am looking forward to Annual Meeting and getting to know a whole lot more folk in the Conference. The staff at Piedmont College have been so welcoming and generous and willing to provide what we need to have a wonderful time together. I am eagerly looking forward to the pre-meeting Authorized Ministers’ Retreat and our conversation together. And I wait with joyful anticipation for the installation service on Saturday



with dear friends and colleagues in ministry as a part of that celebration of our mutual ministry.

Meanwhile I have enjoyed my travels around the conference. I appreciated the faithful and deep conversation of the Ala-Tenn (MS) Association Re-Imagining Task Force as they wrestled with the role of the Association and the changes of recent years. And I got to learn a new way of dining—meat and three. Rev. Debbie Douglas and the congregation at Belvidere, Tennessee welcomed me to the adult Sunday school time, to the pulpit, and to the Men's Brotherhood Fish Fry. Love those hush puppies! And the desserts and fish were pretty good too.



Rev. Debbie Douglas gives a children's message about Heifer International, an ongoing children's ministry at First United Church, Belvidere

I was able to meet with the pastor search committees for both Uplands Community Church in Pleasant Hill and Fairfield Glade Community Church. Both communities provided wonderful hospitality. And in both churches, I found the search committees doing good, effective work and they were a lot of fun to visit with also. I especially appreciate Ann and Hal Shoup hosting me in Pleasant Hill and Anne and Milt Tack hosting me in Fairfield Glade.



Ann and Hal Shoup



Anne Tack, chair Fairfield Glade Search  
Committee

While in Tennessee I also had a chance to visit with area clergy in Pleasant Hill. My thanks to Lyle and Sharon Wieble for making those arrangements. And I got a chance to tour Uplands Village and meet staff there. And I spent a day in Knoxville visiting Church of the Savior and the pastors, John Gill and Leslie Etheredge. Back home I had the opportunity to worship at Kirkwood UCC and received a warm welcome from Susannah Davis and meet some of the members in discernment in that congregation.



Children's time at Kirkwood UCC

As I look toward Easter Sunday and the promise of new life and resurrection, it is not hard to see new life in the work and fellowship of the churches, pastors, and leaders in this Conference. May that energy, hospitality, and openness to new seasons be a part of your journey in the days to come.

Blessings abound, June

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